

Press Release

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EUROPEAN UNION INVESTS €23 MILLION IN A NEW ‘GREEN WAY’ FORWARD FOR CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL

The EU’s INTERREG VA Programme has offered approximately €23.27 million in funding for three new cross-border greenway projects that will open up new sustainable travel routes for both cyclists and pedestrians.

Greenways are corridors of land that are recognised for their ability to connect people and places together. They enhance existing outdoor recreational opportunities and can be used equally by cyclists, walkers and joggers.

The overall objective of the INTERREG VA Programme in supporting the three projects is to increase the number of cross-border journeys made by cycling or walking by up to 10% across the region by 2023.

€14.86m has been offered to the ‘North West Greenways Network’ that will create a network of 46.5 km of new greenways through three distinct routes connecting: Derry-Londonderry via Pennyburn to Buncrana; Muff Village to Derry via Culmore; and Strabane to Lifford via Lifford Bridge. These routes have been carefully selected to achieve the greatest impact on carbon emission reduction.

€3.46m worth of EU funding has been offered for the development of the ‘Carlingford Lough Greenway’ which will create 10.1 km of new cross-border greenway, linking Newry City in Northern Ireland to Carlingford in Ireland. It will also create and implement a promotional marketing campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of walking and cycling for regular everyday commuters.

€4.95m worth of funding has also been offered for the development of the ‘Ulster Canal Greenway (Phase 2)’ enabling the creation of 22 km of new greenway between Co. Monaghan and Co. Armagh. The new greenway will follow the route of the disused Ulster Canal from Smithborough through to Monaghan Town, cross the Armagh border at Ardgonnell and extend onwards to Middletown.

Match-funding for the projects has been provided by the Department for Infrastructure in Northern Ireland and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in Ireland.

Welcoming the funding Northern Ireland's Infrastructure Minister Chris Hazzard MLA, said: **“I recently gave the green light to 1,000km of greenways across the north. I am delighted that three key cross-border routes to link Derry and Strabane to Donegal, Newry to Carlingford and Middletown to Smithboro – which all tie into this network – have secured this offer of EU co-financing. The benefits of developing greenways go well beyond transport. The health, economic, environmental and social impacts help enhance the quality of life for users. This funding demonstrates commitment to further develop sustainable transport options here.”**

Welcoming the funding offers Ireland's Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Shane Ross TD, said: **“I am delighted to hear of the decision of SEUPB to award funding to these greenway projects under the INTERREG VA Programme. These projects will provide valuable cross border corridors for use by both commuter and leisure cyclists and further enhance the level of cross-border co-operation between jurisdictions.**

“The delivery of these projects ties in with my Department's vision for the development of a nationwide network of greenways. Projects such as these bring numerous benefits - including economic, social, health and environmental - to the communities through which they pass or which are linked by them. The potential for these routes to be used by commuters travelling to and from work each day offers an opportunity to reduce dependence on the private car and help reduce carbon emissions. They also offer excellent potential to attract visitors to the areas with positive impacts on local economies.

“The commitment of all parties involved in the planning, development and submission of applications for these projects to SEUPB is admirable. My Department and Donegal, Monaghan and Louth local authorities look forward to working closely with our counterparts in Northern Ireland on the delivery of these projects,” he continued.

Commenting on the funding awards Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, which manages the INTERREG VA Programme, said: **“These three distinct, yet interconnected projects, will substantially increase the quality and quantity of**



greenway offering on both sides of the border. Collectively they will help to deliver upon one of the core objectives of the INTERREG VA Programme in terms of increasing the number of eco-friendly cross-border journeys, made on a daily basis.”

- ENDS.

For more information please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB on Mob. 07834 778018 or via e-mail john.mccandless@seupb.eu

Notes to Editor:

Additional background on the Greenway projects

1. Project Name: North West Greenways Network (NWGN)

Project Description: The NWGN project will create a network of 46.5 km of new cross-border greenways through the development of the following routes:

- **Route 1:** Derry via Pennyburn and Bridgend border crossing to Buncrana/Letterkenny via Tooban Junction = 32.5 km
- **Route 2:** Muff Village to Derry via Culmore and Muff Border Crossing and Culmore = 10.5 km
- **Route 3:** Strabane to Lifford via Lifford Bridge = 3.5 km

The routes have been carefully selected on the basis of having the greatest capacity to impact on carbon emission reduction.

Lead Partner: Derry City and Strabane District Council

Project partners: Donegal County Council, Transport NI and Sustrans

Level of funding offered: €14.86m

2. Project Name: Carlingford Lough Greenway

Project Description: The Carlingford Lough Greenway project comprises of two phases:

- **Phase One - Capital/Construction Phase** Construction of 10.1 km of new cross-border Greenway in accordance with prevailing cycling standards.
- **Phase Two – Greenway Activity Programme, Promotion & Marketing.** A Greenway Activity Programme and Marketing plan that raises awareness of the benefits of walking and cycling for regular everyday commuter journeys which will take place alongside the development of the Greenway.

The new Greenway will join two existing sections of Greenway, one from Carlingford Marina to Omeath village completed in 2013 and the other from Albert Basin (the centre of Newry



city) to the aforementioned Weir, due for completion in 2016, giving a total length for the Carlingford Lough Greenway of 19.7km, joining Carlingford to Newry City via Omeath.

Lead Partner: Louth County Council

Project partners: Newry, Mourne & Down District Council and East Border Region Ltd

Level of funding offered: €3.46m

3. Project Name: Ulster Canal Greenway (UCG) Phase 2

Project Description: The Ulster Canal Greenway Phase 2 project will create 21.8 km of new greenway between County Monaghan and County Armagh. It will result in a 4.5% increase in the number of cross-border journeys via cycling and walking by 2023.

The route of the proposed UCG runs along the N54/N12/A3 road corridor. The Greenway will start at Smithboro and follow the disused canal bank to connect with the existing 4.2 km section of Greenway (Phase 1) through Monaghan Town, re-emerging thereafter and continuing to the Armagh border at Ardgonnell and onwards into NI along the canal to Middletown.

The project is designed to connect with the completed Phase 1 section, which utilises the disused Ulster Canal to provide a highly strategic route linking the east/west sides of Monaghan.

Lead Partner: Waterways Ireland

Project partners: Monaghan County Council, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council and East Border Region Ltd

Level of funding offered: €4.95m

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu